

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

4-H/Youth Programming Motivates Small Producers to Register Premises

Situation

Educating and informing Washington's small producers about the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is challenging. Industry/commodity groups and the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) have regular communication with the State's larger producers, but small producers are often less accessible. As a result, they are more likely to be misinformed about the program's status – and be less receptive to outreach.

Extension Strategy

Washington State University (WSU) Extension approached WSDA for State funding to engage small producers and address their concerns about NAIS. Since small producers are often involved in 4-H through their children, the organization was identified as an effective channel to reach this segment and garner their support.

Implementation

With the goal of increasing small producer understanding, WSU Extension for Benton and Franklin Counties includes five- to 10-minute NAIS segments in Youth Leadership and 4-H education programs. The talks focus on animal health protection and benefits to the producers. WSDA premises registration forms are available on-site.

The programs are promoted through WSU Extension's e-mail discussion lists; the Central Washington Animal Agricultural Team's statewide quarterly newsletter; direct mailings to project-animal producers; and an Extension monthly newsletter that reaches over 12,000 youth families, 4-H leaders and FFA advisors. Each communication piece integrates NAIS into a broader, often species-specific, topic area. To keep messaging up-to-date, WSU Extension holds a monthly conference call with WSDA to stay informed of any changes in regulatory policy.

Outcome and Impact

Held in the evenings and on weekends, WSU Extension's 4-H Education programs attract a significant number of adults, including parents, leaders and project-animal producers – an impressive turnout considering the program's focus on youth. Informal feedback revealed that small producers truly understood the demonstrated benefits of NAIS, and ultimately left the programs with a clear sense of NAIS's program status. From a statewide perspective, WSU Extension's 4-H outreach is often cited as one of the most effective ways to increase premises registration among small producers.

Contact Information

Jerry Newman, Extension 4-H Youth Specialist, (509) 335-2800, newmanj@wsu.edu
Washington State University – Statewide Specialist

Jean Smith, Extension Educator, (509) 735-3551, Jean_Smith@co.benton.wa.us
Washington State University – Benton and Franklin Counties

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

STATE: Washington
ESTIMATED PREMISES: 22,155
PREMISES REGISTERED: 6.3%
PROGRAM STATUS: Voluntary

KEY STRATEGIES:

- 4-H used to educate small producers about NAIS
- 5-10 minute segments on NAIS embedded into 4-H programs
- Direct mailings to youth families and project-animal producers for awareness
- Programs conveyed animal health and small producer benefits of NAIS